

Anarchists say:

ELECTIONS ARE NO ANSWER



The U.S. government, led by George W. Bush, is attacking the living standards of U.S. workers, attacking our democratic rights, restricting the opportunities of Black and other oppressed people, degrading the environment, and waging vicious wars on the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Most opponents of these policies hope to end them through elections. In the U.S. antiwar activists, liberals, union militants, politically conscious Black people and others are gearing up to support the Democratic Party candidate as the great capitalist hope. It is a thin hope. The Democratic candidate, John Kerry, voted for the Iraqi and Afghan wars. Now he says he would stay in Iraq and *increase* the number of troops there. And against a backdrop of outsourcing and corporate assaults on our living standards, Kerry was reported by the *Wall Street Journal* to have tellingly told AFL-CIO President Sweeney, 'John, I won't run an antibusiness campaign'.

In reality the Democratic Party is a party of big business despite its claims to represent the interests of ordinary people. It is a party of U.S. racism, militarism and imperialism. It led the U.S. into World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the bombing of Yugoslavia. It continued the bombing and blockade of Iraq, killing more than a million and preparing for the current war. It has given uncritical backing to Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. Above all, the Democratic Party supports the continuation of the capitalist system *even to its own detriment and that of some of its most loyal supporters* as its senatorial wing showed in 2000 when every senator, including Kerry, rebuffed the Congressional Black Caucus' efforts to hold up the electoral vote count because of the rampant disenfranchisement of Black people in Florida.

That said, the Democrats are not as bad as the appalling Bush administration, which represents the *far* right. The far right is worse than the moderate Democrats. *But we cannot defeat the far right by relying on the Democrats as a lesser evil!* It's still an evil. El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) said forty years ago that the Republicans will stab you with a nine-inch knife and the Democrats with a six-inch one. The wound may not be as deep, but you are just as dead.

Since lesser-evilmism doesn't work, some people hope to replace the Democrats with a new party such as the Greens or a labor party or whatever Ralph Nader organizes. However, as anarchists we say the whole electoral system is a trap. It is the capitalists' system. It runs on big money. It is arranged to keep out new parties through complex electoral rules. Anyway, what is proposed is a third party on pro-capitalist program. Working people do not need another capitalist party.

We are not trying to persuade individuals not to vote. *Moreover, we will defend by any means necessary any working-class or oppressed person's right to vote.* What we do say, however, is that an individual vote, one way or another, has little effect in this massified, overcentralized society with its thousands and millions of other voters. What we are concerned with is what large organizations and

groups should do. Millions of people are in labor unions, in Black and Latino communities, in the women's movement, gay and lesbian groups and ecological and environmental organizations.

We should stop thinking of ourselves just as individual voters who vote every couple of years for someone else to *represent* us, to be political *for* us--while we go back to being politically passive onlookers. Instead we should see ourselves as potentially powerful members of collective groups. Suppose the shell game of Democrats and Republicans were rejected by the unions and organizations of the oppressed. Suppose such forces were to declare themselves *independent* of the government, parties and capitalism and really fight for what their members need. Then we could make real changes.

Most progress in the U.S. was won outside of the electoral process (and the same is true in other countries). Slavery was abolished only through illegal actions and eventually a civil war. Unions were won by sit-down strikes and battles with the police and National Guard. Legal segregation was ended through civil disobedience campaigns. Other gains came only after massive urban rebellions. The Vietnam War was stopped both by the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese themselves and mass demonstrations, student strikes and sit-ins, draft dodging and a virtual mutiny in the U.S. armed forces.

There is a special strength among workers (who also overlap with other oppressed groups like Blacks, Latinos, Asians, women, gays and lesbians, &c.) We working people produce and distribute the goods in this society. We could stop everything if we wanted--as in a general strike against the war and racism and for the other things we need. We could take over the factories, offices, and other workplaces and run them in a humane way. We could restart society in a new fashion, with production democratically organized for human needs rather than for profit. This is the potential power of the working class. But this will not happen so long as the unions and community organizations are dominated by bureaucrats who support the Democrats, the state and capitalism.

Anarchists are happy to see a broad multi-tendency, movement against war, racism and for global justice. But within that movement we fight for greater militancy and independence from all capitalist parties. And we try to persuade people of the need for a complete social change, a revolution, to socialist anarchism.

We advocate that the unions reorganize themselves into militant and democratic institutions run by the rank and file, in opposition to capitalism.

We call on all movements of the oppressed to become independent of the capitalist parties, internally democratic, and politically revolutionary.

We support any military personnel who disobey illegal orders or who quit the military.

We demand: U.S. Troops Out of Iraq and Afghanistan! End the Occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine! Jobs, Justice and Respect for All Oppressed and Working-Class People!

What is Anarchism?

Most people don't know what anarchism really stands for. As we see it, it stands for a new, radically-democratic society where everyone participates in making decisions. The existing capitalist, patriarchal and racist bureaucratic state would be replaced by a federation of workers and community councils, rooted in local direct democracy. The army and police would be replaced by a popular militia, the people armed and self-organized. The capitalist economy, run for the benefit of the few, would be replaced by a federation of nonprofit worker-run industries and consumer cooperatives. There would be democratic planning from the bottom up--libertarian socialism. Women and gay people would be able to organize themselves to fight against sexism. Black, Latino and Asian people would be free to organize themselves in any way they choose.

The Northeastern Federation of Anacho-Communists (NEFAC) is organizing people to educate themselves and to fight for these ideas. Join us.

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